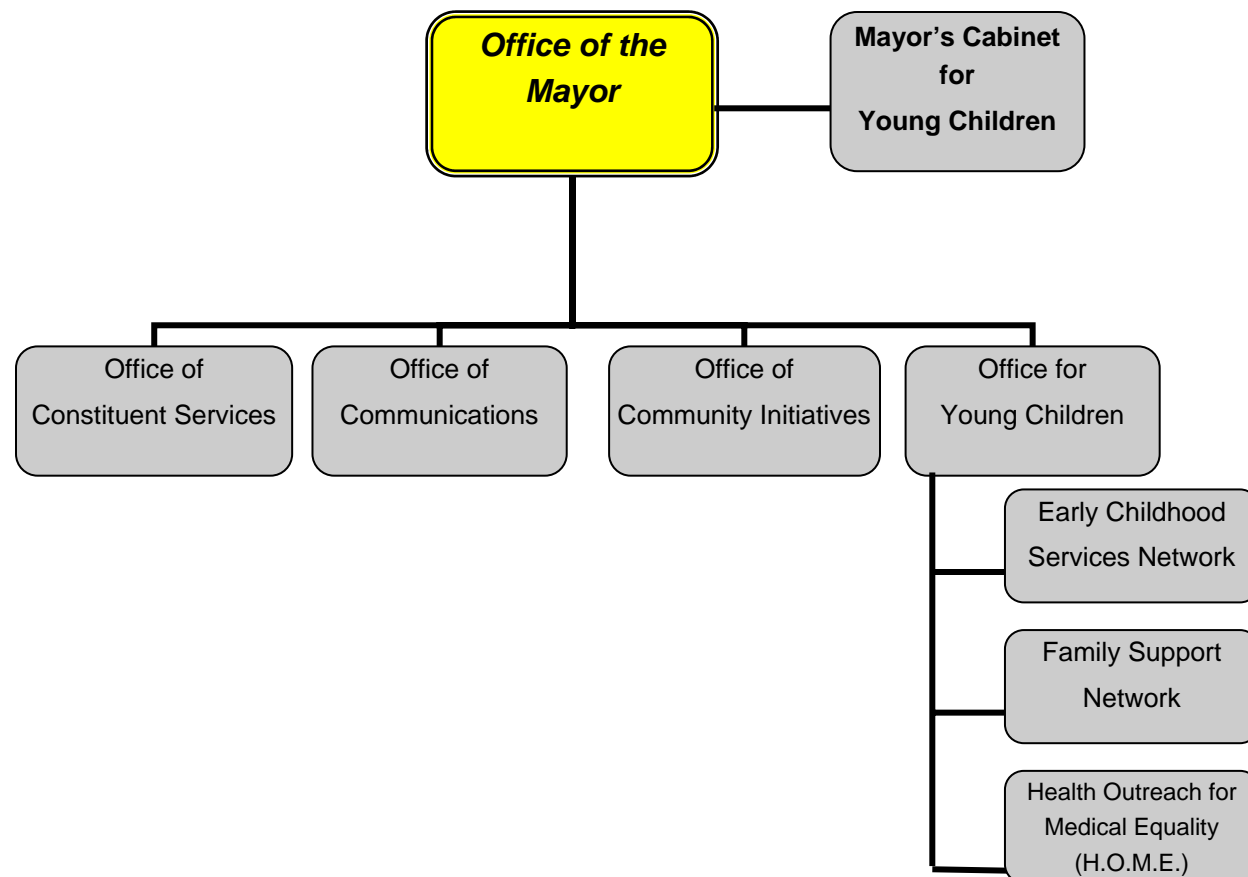


ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

City of Hartford

Organizational Structure

Cabinet & Office for Young Children

**OFFICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

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OFFICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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"Born to Succeed!"

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of "Born to Succeed", a quarterly update on the progress the Mayor's Office for Young Children is making to ensure education begins at birth for all of Hartford's children.

Earlier this year, we announced the comprehensive, long-term plan to enable our youngest citizens to have access to the resources they need to succeed in school and in life. This encompasses health, early childhood education, and a smooth transition to school. What started out as a blueprint has now evolved into a collaborative effort that incorporates the input of early childhood professionals, policymakers, community leaders and parents.

The goal of this first issue of "Born to Succeed" is to answer the most commonly asked questions with regard to the Mayor's Cabinet and Office for Young Children. I'm confident that you'll find this newsletter informative and inspirational.

Please enjoy and together

let's ensure our children grow and succeed!

Sincerely,

Eddie A. Perez
Mayor



What is the Mayor's Blueprint?

Mayor Perez' Blueprint for Young Children is a plan to unite diverse programs and services in the City of Hartford and meld them into a cohesive coordinated, family-centered

system that focuses public policy-making and financial investment to improve the lives of young children, ages birth to eight.

On June 9, 2004, Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez asked the Hartford Public Schools, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and the Connecticut Commission on Children to chart a new course for the City to strengthen early childhood policy and services. In launching the effort, he gave this charge:

*"In order to develop a city-wide system that promotes the healthy growth and development of all Hartford's young children and their families, I ask that you consider, in collaboration with my office, drafting an early childhood blueprint for the City of Hartford that would address the basic building blocks-taking into account and building on those already in place- that would constitute a **Passport to Success**."*

BACKGROUND

What is the relationship between Passport-to-Success and the Blueprint?

In November 2002, the City of Hartford's Mayor Eddie Perez announced the Passport to Success initiative. The overarching purpose of the Passport To School Success Initiative (PSSI) was to increase substantially the proportion of Hartford's children that attain school readiness before entering kindergarten.



Building on the work of Passport to Success, the Mayor's Blueprint Team, comprised of five members, recently presented a comprehensive report outlining a plan to integrate existing and new policies and programs to create the Hartford Blueprint for Young Children.

The Office for Young Children is confident that this *Blueprint* will provide strength and depth to the "Passport to Success" initiative, as well as improve the lives of Hartford's young children.

Is the Blueprint the Actual Plan, or is it a Plan for a Plan?

The Blueprint is an actual plan adopted by the Mayor. The Cabinet, currently comprised of nine members to be expanded to 11, has been established as well as an Office for Young Children. Both operate under the auspices of the Mayor's Office. The Executive Director, Assistant Director and support staff of the Office for Young Children has been appointed. The charge for the Office for Young Children is to begin implementation of the Blueprint and its six building blocks.

How was the Blueprint developed?

The initiative came directly out of the Mayor's Office. Working in partnership with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving along with the Connecticut Commission On Children and the Hartford Public Schools, Mayor Eddie Perez charged a small group to identify the key issues facing young children in the city, and to forge a comprehensive, multi-year plan.

After nearly a year of work, the group proposed the Blueprint to the Mayor, including a significantly changed organiza-

tional leadership structure for the City to drive the plan.

Central to the administrative structure is Mayor Perez' commitment to young children, including his willingness to channel these concerns within his office with the support of a high-level Cabinet that includes government and business leaders, and a fully staffed Office for Young Children, thereby elevating the visibility of the issues and needs of children birth to eight within city government. The Superintendent of Schools, a leader in early childhood matters, has been a partner in this process, and in fact, the Executive Director of the Office For Young Children was formerly Senior Director, Early Childhood and Accreditation, at the Hartford Public Schools.

Were There Early Childhood Initiatives in Hartford Prior to the Blueprint?

Yes. Since the 1950s city government has operated a well-recognized day care program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. In 1997, state legislation created a School Readiness program in Connecticut, with Hartford the largest of 14 key beginning communities. This program, overseen by the Mayor's Office

Provider Network Meetings

grown to nearly 50 members and meets regularly once or twice per month depending on need. The Provider Network, advisory to the Office for Young Children, serves as a voice and key resource with regard to early childhood education and care for Hartford's young children and their families. The Provider Network membership includes parents and Hartford early childhood education and care professionals who have extensive expertise and diverse experiences related to the provision and improvement of early childhood services for children between the ages of birth to eight years.

What is the role of the OFYC Provider Network and its members?

In order to maximize the potential of the Provider Network, members are expected to attend all meetings and actively participate in discussions and activities. Similar to the roles of Cabinet members, participants are expected to:

- Contribute to the success of the Office for Young Children Provider Network by

participating in Committees and/or Task Force Groups;

- Research, discuss, and review issues to strengthen, the decision-making process;
- Contribute to the development of key partnerships and collaborative efforts;
- Contribute to the establishment of performance standards as defined by School Readiness Legislation, and
- In accordance with the directives and leadership of the Mayor and the Office for Young Children, advocate for new or revised City/State early childhood policies and programs.

How can Provider Network members be assured that their concerns are communicated to the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children and the Mayor?

In order to ensure concerns and questions are communicated to the Cabinet and the Mayor, the Assistant Director of the Office for Young Children oversees and facilitates Provider Network Meetings. In addition, a member of the Provider Network is also a

member of the Cabinet for Young Children. Both individuals are responsible for forwarding information to the Office for Young Children's Director.

Where will Network Meetings be convened?

FY '06 Network meetings have been scheduled to be convened at the Capitol Region Education Council. Beyond FY '06, Network meetings will continue to be convened at a location that is easily accessible to members.

Who can attend Provider Network meetings?

Provider Network meetings are public meetings and are open to those who wish to attend. Interested participants should contact the Mayor's Office for Young Children at (860) 543-8528.

What is the Membership of the Cabinet for Young Children?

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Eddie A. Perez	Mayor	City of Hartford
Robert Henry	Superintendent	Hartford Public Schools
John Chu	Senior Vice President for eBusiness & Technology	Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.
Lee Erdmann	Chief Operating Officer	City of Hartford
Lena Rodriguez	Senior Vice President of Operations	Community Renewal Team
Dr. Charles A. Peck	Regional Medical Director	Aetna
Joseph P. Lacher, Jr.	Executive Vice President & CEO of Personal Lines	St. Paul’s Travelers
Christopher H. Hall	Vice President for Programs & Special Projects	Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Laura Taylor	Parent	Hartford Public Schools
Ann Horton	Director	Trinity College Community Child Center
Dr. Paul Dworkin	Physician-In-Chief	CT Children’s Medical Center
Nancy Diaz	Chairman Family Resource Aide	UCONN School of Medicine- Pediatrics Hartford Public Schools

Who are the Individuals Staffing the Mayor’s Office For Young Children?

The office consists of an:

- Executive Director

José Colón-Rivas, Ph.D.

- Assistant Director

Jane Crowell, M.S.

- Administrative Assistant

Nancy Ortiz

- Executive Program Assistant

Theresa Brown

- Childcare/Program Specialist

Renée Richards

What Task Force Groups have been or will be established by the Office for Young Children?

Presently, there will be six task force groups established, each correlating to one of the Mayor’s Blueprint Building Blocks:

- Newborn Screening & Home Visiting for families
- Neighborhood-based family support and development
- Childcare and Early Childhood Education

- Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten
- Educational excellence and school success in early grades
- Universal access and use of primary healthcare

In the future, additional task force groups may be developed by the OFYC based on the need.

What is the Office for Young Children Provider Network?

The Network was established in 1999 at the request of Hartford’s school readiness provider representatives. Originally a small group, the Network has

and a School Readiness Council, operated a program of some 1,000 early care/education spaces for three and four year-olds at an estimated \$7.5 million per year. The appointed Assistant Director of the Office for Young Children was the Director of Hartford School Readiness Council which is now integrated into the Office for Young Children. The Hartford Public Schools is a major part of this program, operating hundreds of slots located in every elementary school in the City.

Does Mayor Perez’ Blueprint incorporate existing Early Childhood Initiatives?

The Blueprint plan builds on existing initiatives, expanding them to cover the age spectrum of birth to five, strengthen family support services, including the transition to kindergarten component, increase K-3 performance (literacy, numeracy), and focus on comprehensive preventive health services. The Mayor’s Cabinet for Young Children and the Office for Young Children will oversee school readiness programs and expand efforts to comprehensively integrate all activities for children birth to eight years of age.

What is the Mayor’s Blueprint Decision-Making Protocol?

In Hartford, the chief elected official is Mayor Eddie Perez,

What is the Mayor’s Cabinet for Young Children?

Established by Mayor Perez, the Cabinet for Young Chil-



who has recently unveiled his Early Childhood Blueprint, establishing a Cabinet For Young Children to assume the responsibilities of Hartford’s School Readiness Council.

The Cabinet acts in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and the Superintendent with the Mayor assuming final decision-making authority. Mayor Perez has also established an Office For Young Children comprised of his appointed staff, to provide leadership and to implement Hartford’s early childhood initiative on his behalf.

dren is a cohesive management structure at the highest level of city government to work with the Mayor’s Office for Young Children to unify and consolidate all policy-making, planning, coordination, and implementation on early childhood issues. The Cabinet comprised of eleven individuals, advises the Mayor in setting policy on all matters affecting young children. The Cabinet includes both elected and appointed public sector leaders, as well as non-governmental appointees representing important stakeholders.

Roles & Responsibilities

What are the Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor’s Cabinet for Young Children?

- Recommend and oversee city policy on early childhood
 - Establish short- and long-term goals and targets;
 - Advance the “Passport to Success” Blueprint; and
 - Assume the functions of the state-mandated School Readiness Council.
- In accordance with Connecticut School Readiness Legislation, the Council or in this case, the Cabinet: (a) makes recommendations to the Mayor and the Superintendent on issues relating to school readiness; (b) fosters partnerships among providers of school readiness programs; (c) assists in the identification of the need for school readiness programs and the number of children not being served by such a program; (d) identifies existing and prospective resources and services available to children and families; (e) facilitates the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families, including referral procedures; (f) exchanges information with other councils, the community and organizations serving the needs of children

- and families; (g) makes recommendations to school officials concerning transition from school readiness programs to kindergarten; and (h) encourages public participation.
- Pursuant to Cabinet Bylaws, members of the Mayor’s Cabinet for Young Children are expected to:
- Make early childhood a priority. Attend all meetings and actively participate on the Cabinet including work groups and committees.
 - Continue to support the existing array of Public School, City, Head Start, and Community-Based programs but heighten accountability with regard to quality standards.
 - Aggressively advocate for universal preschool opportunities for all eligible Hartford preschool children and their families.
 - Assess Hartford’s early childhood needs and develop appropriate strategies to help more children enter school ready to learn.
 - Strengthen families to ensure parents have access to the information, tools, and supports they need to get their children off to a good start in life.
 - Promote child health and safety through public outreach and education campaigns.

- Advocate for increased funding resources essential to produce desired results and outcomes.
- Contribute to the success of the Mayor’s Advisory Cabinet-Office for Young Children by co-chairing or participating in committees and/or task force groups to help carry out the work of the Cabinet and ensure city-wide input.
- Research, discuss, and review issues to strengthen the decision-making process.
- Contribute to the development of key partnerships and collaborative efforts.
- Advocate for new or revised City/State policies and programs that are necessary to the development of a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system that ensures equitable access for all young Hartford children and their families.
- Contribute to the establishment of performance standards as defined by Public Act 97-259, and on an ongoing basis, monitor Hartford’s performance of the various components in accordance with the performance standards.



OFFICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Where are meetings of the Mayor’s Cabinet for Young Children held and are they open to the public?

Mayor Perez convenes FY ’06 Cabinet meetings in the Green Conference Room located on the 2nd floor of City Hall. In



accordance with School Readiness Legislation and the Freedom of Information Act, all meetings are open to the public.

What is the Office For Young Children?

The Office for Young Children, one of four offices within the Mayor’s office, is exclusively

charged with leading and driving the city’s early childhood agenda. It is led by an Executive Director, appointed by the Mayor and to the Superintendent of schools. The Office for Young Children has the responsibility to plan, innovate, and to track at a minimum approximately \$35 million in annual expenditures

that the City and Schools directly dedicate to early care and education.

What is the purpose of the Mayor’s Office for Young Children?

The Office for Young Children’s main goal is to unite diverse programs and services in the

City of Hartford and meld them into a cohesive coordinated, family-centered system that focuses public policy making and financial investment to improve the lives of young children, ages birth to eight.

It provides direction and a comprehensive approach to early childhood policy in Hartford. Part of the Mayor’s Office, the Office for Young Children performs day-to-day planning and coordination, serving as the interdisciplinary lead agency to coordinate and implement early childhood policy and the Mayor’s Blueprint.

Responsibilities are:

- Implement early childhood policy and the Mayor’s Blueprint, coordinating early care and education planning;
- Develop annually with the Office of Management and Budget, a “Children’s Budget;”
- Issue a bi-annual “report card” on the status of early childhood;
- Lead and/or participate on boards and commissions related to early childhood; and seek additional revenues.